

Douglas A. Ducey
Governor

Jeff Whitney
State Forester

Office of the State Forester

Arizona State Forestry Division

1110 W. Washington St., Suite 100
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 771-1400



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT:

Bob Celaya
Forest Health Specialist
Arizona State Forestry Division
o) 602.771.1415
f) 602.771.1421
bobcelaya@azsf.gov
www.azsf.az.gov

FALL WEBWORM ACTIVITY REPORTED IN THE SHOWLOW AND LINDEN AREA

Show Low, Arizona, August 18, 2015— Fall webworm, a native insect has again been reported in several communities in eastern Arizona.

The webbing produced by these hairy caterpillars is very visible and loosely arranged in layers within the foliage, with the caterpillars enclosed inside the webs. The webs and the defoliation caused by these insects are mainly unsightly, and is not a serious threat to the health of the infested tree(s).

Arizona walnuts, apples, aspens, poplars (cottonwoods) and purple-leaf plums are its primary hosts, with lilac and NM locust identified recently. Other shade, fruit, and ornamental trees can also be attractive to the caterpillars.

Prior to 1999 the webworm had not been detected above the Mogollon Rim. Now it's not unusual to find them from Forest Lakes to Heber-Overgaard, Show Low and over to Vernon and Eagar.

On small trees, webs can be properly pruned out and disposed of in plastic bags. Begin pruning now and utilize a pole pruner on larger trees. If chemical control is needed, a biological insecticide, *Bacillus thuringiensis* (B.t.) is available (as a foliage spray) under several trade names. It kills only caterpillars feeding on the foliage and is most effective on the younger caterpillars. Spot treatments of the webs and surrounding foliage with B.t. is recommended. Caterpillars usually stop feeding two to three days after treatment. Caution: Caterpillar hairs can cause an irritating rash if touched.

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CAUTION PESTICIDES: Please Read

Specific chemical recommendations are given with caution. Whenever using chemical pesticides always check the pesticide label to be certain it's registered for use on the site to be treated. Chemical registrations and chemical use regulations frequently change. Contact manufacturers for the most current product information, including supplemental labeling and special local needs regulations. It is a violation of federal law to use any pesticide in a manner inconsistent with its labeling. Check with the Arizona Department of Agriculture, County Extension Agents and State or Federal forest health management specialists for current information on available insecticides.

For further information about this insect and proper pruning, visit the following websites:

<https://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/factsheet/fall-webworm2010.pdf>

<http://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1139.pdf>

For local assistance with this insect or other forest and woodland health concerns in the White Mountains, contact our office in Pinetop at 928-367-0313.

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